

Message Text

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ACTION AF-06

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AMEMBASSY MADRID NIACT IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS PRIORITY

AMEOBASY PARIS PRIORITY

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USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L NOUAKCHOTT 1074

MADRID ALSO FOR SECRETARY'S PARTY

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PBOR, PFOR, SS, MR, SP, AG, MO

SUBJECT: MAURITANIA REQUESTS US INTERVENE WITH SPANISH ON
SPANISH SAHARA

REF: NOUAKCHOTT 1073

1. MAURITAINIAN FOREIGN MINISTER MOUKNASS SUMMONED ME ON
URGENT BASIS EARLY MAY 31 (A) TO REGISTER MAURITANIAN
GOVERNMENT'S VIGOROUS OBJECTION TO SPANISH ASSERTION (CONTAINED
IN RECENT LETTER TO UN SYG) THAT GOS WOULD, IN ABSENCE OF
OTHER SOLUTION, SET DATE FOR ITS DEPARTURE FROM SAHARA AND
WOULD HAND POWER OVER TO ENTITY CHOSEN UNILATERALLY BY IT;
AND (B) TO REQUEST USG TO INTERVENE AS GREAT POWER AND AS
FRIEND OF SPAIN WITH SPANISH AUTHORITIES TO CONVEY GIRM'S
DISPLEASURE AND TO URGE GOS TO FULFILL ITS RESPONSIBILITIES
AS MEMBER OF UNITED NATIONS TO PRESERVE PRESENT SITUATION
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IN SAHARA UNTIL INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY CAN WORK OUT AND

BEGIN IMPLEMENTATION OF DETAILED DECOLONIZATION PROGRAM. MINISTER REPORTED GIRM HAD COMMUNICATED ITS POSITION TO UN SYG YESTERDAY AND THAT MAURVQNIAN DECLARATION WILL BE DISTRIBUTED IN NEW YORK TODAY.

2. GIRM APPROACH ON SPANISH SAHARA IS SHARP BREAK WITH PAST PRACTICE. THIS IS FIRST TIME FOREIGN MINISTER HAS INITIATED DISCUSSION OF DISPUTE WITH EMBASSY, HAS SOLICITED US SUPPORT FOR MAURITANIAN POSITION, OR HAS REQUESTED US INVOLVEMENT. INPARALLEL MOVE, MAURITANIAN PRESIDENT OULD DADDAH PERSONALLY OUTLINED GIRM POSITION IN INTERVIEW WITH AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE CORRESPONDENT YESTERDAY AND PUBLISHED THIS MORNING(REFTEL).

3. ELABORATING, MOUKNASS STATED THAT IF SPANISH WISH TO CONTINUE BEING RESPONSIBLE MEMBER OF INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY, THEY MUST TAKE STEPS TO PRESERVE PRESENT SITUATION IN SAHARA UNTIL INTERNATIONAL COURT HANDS DOWN ADVISORY OPINION AND INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY HAS AGREED UPON DETAILED DECOLONIALIZATIONPROCEDURE WHICH ASSIGNS PRECISE ROLES TO ALL PARTICIPANTS (PERHAPS AT UP-COMING REGUAR GENERAL ASSEMBLY WHERE SAHRA PROBLEM WILL UNQUESTIONABLY BE DEBATED AT LENGTH). SPANISH CANNOT TAKE OVER AN AREA, IMPOSE SPANISH RULE ON IT, PROFIT ECONOMICALLY FROM IT FOR HALF A CENTURY, AND THEN WALK OUT. EVEN WORSE WOULD BE SPANISH ATTEMPT TO IMPOSE UNILATERALLY FUTURE POLICAL ORGANIZATION ON TERRITORY IN QUESTION AND ON INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY. MINISTER ASSERTED GOS HAS RESPONSIBILITY TO UN TO PRESERVE CONDITIONS NECESSARY TO ORDERLY IMPLEMENTATION OF UN DECISIONS,POLITICAL AND LEGAL. WHILE RECOGNIZING INTERNAL SECURITY PROBLEM WHICH HAS OCCURED RECENTLY,MOUKNASS ASSERTEDGOS SHOULD NOT BE DISMAYED BY MODES BIT OF POLITICAL UPHEAVAL OR EVEN VIOLENCE LAID ON FOR BENEFIT OF VISITING UN COMMITTEE. RECENT UPSURGE IS NO MORE THAN USUAL AND EXPECTABLE ACTIVITY ASSOCIATED WITH ROUTINE PRESSURE FOR DECOLONIZATIM.

4. IF HOWEVER, GOS DESIRES TO PULL OUT IMMEDIATELY, GIRM ACCEPTS SPANISH RIGHT TO DO SO. BUT, IF SPANISH DECIDE TO FOLLOW THIS COURSE, THEY MAY NOT RPT NOT MAKE UNILATERAL DECISION TO HAND POWER OVER TO SOME ENTITY CHOSEN UNILATERALLY BY THEM.

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5. SPEAKING QUIETLY BUT FIRMLY AND WITH FULL REALIZATION OF IMPACT OF HIS STATEMENT, FOREIGN MINISTER DECLARED THAT MAURITANIA, DESPITE ITS OBVIOUS WEAKNESS, WILL NEVER ACCEPT SUCH SPANISH ATTEMPT TO PREJUDGE ISSUE. HE ADDED, MOREOVER, THAT HE HAD MADE THIS POSITION CLEAR TO SPANISH.

6. MOUKNASS STATED GIRM RECOGNIZES REALITY OF SPANISH ECONOMIC

INVOLVEMENT IN AND INTEREST IN SAHARA AND HE DECLARED GIRM ACCEPTS FULLY AND WHOLEHEARTEDLY PRINCIPLE THAT INVESTOR ANYWHERE MUST BE ABLE TO RECOUP HIS ORIGINAL INVESTMENT TOGETHER WITH A REASONABLE RETURN ON HIS CAPITAL. SINCE THERE IS NO QUESTION WHATSOEVER ABOUT THIS PRINCIPLE ECONOMIC SEGMENT OF SAHARA PROBLEM CAN BE NEATLY SET TO ONE SIDE TO BE WORKED OUT AS TECHNICAL EXERCISE SEPARATELY AND AT SOME OTHER TIME. BUT, MOUKNASS, DECLARED, IF SPANISH DEPART PRECIPITOUSLY, OR IF GOS ATTEMPTS TO IMPOSE UNILATERAL SETTLEMENT ON SAHARA AND ON THREE NEIGHBORING ARAB COUNTRIES, SPANISH CAN BE ASSURED THEY WILL LOSE BOTH THEIR ORIGINAL INVESTMENT AND ANY RETURN ON IT.

7. TURNING TO SUBSTANCE OF SAHARA PROBLEM, MOUKNASS LIKENED TO HISTORIC ETHNIC, FAMILY, AND CULTURAL TIES WHICH LINK SAHARA CLOSELY TO MAURITANIA. HE ASSERTED SAHARA "AT LEAST AS FAR NORTH AS E AAIUN" CLEARLY BELONGS TO MAURITANIA. HE CITED FACT THAT MANY FAMILIES ARE DIVIDED BY PRESENT ARTIFICIAL FRONTIER, WITH BROTHERS, UNCLES, COUSINS LIVING ON BOTH SIDES OF BORDER IN SAHARA AND IN MAURITANIA. HE NOTED SIMILAR SITUATION EXISTS BETWEEN SAHARA AND MOROCCO. ILLUSTRATING HIS POINT, MINISTER REPORTED GIRM LEARNS INSTANTLY OF INCIDENTS IN SAHARA BECAUSE GRIEVING MEMBERS OF FAMILY LIVING ON MAURITANIAN SIDE OF ARTIFICIAL LINE QUICKLY AND VIGOROUSLY BRING NEWS OF DEATH OR INJURY OF FAMILY MEMBER IN SAHARA TO GOVERNMENT'S ATTENTION.

8. ON INTER-ARAB PLANE, MOUKNASS DECLARED GIRM AND KING HASSAN ARE IN TOTAL AGREEMENT ON RESOLUTION OF SAHARA PROBLEM.

HE STATED QUESTION IS MERELY ONE OF IDENTIFYING PRECISELY EXTENT OF EACH NATION'S SOVEREIGNTY, AND IMPLIED THAT MUTUAL SATISFACTORY PARTITION OF SAHARA TERRITORY HAD ALREADY BEEN CONFIDENTIAL

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AGREED UPON. MOUKNASS ALSO NOTED THAT GIRM ACCEPTS ALGERIA AS INTERESTED PARTY IN DISPUTE IN VIEW OF ITS MEMBERSHIP IN SUB-REGION, EVEN THOUGH IT HAS NO TERRITORIAL CLAIMS. HE CALLED ATTENTION TO SPECIAL AND CLOSE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MAURITANIA AND ALGERIA, BUT UNDERScoreD ALGERIA FALLS INTO DIFFERENT CATEGORY FROM MOROCCO, SINCE GIRM AND GOM ARE FELLOW CLAIMANTS OF SAHARAN TERRITORY. (MOUKNASS ACKNOWLEDGED BUT DISMISSED TENSION BETWEEN MOROCCO AND ALGERIA ON THIS AND OTHER PROBLEMS.) MINISTER REPORTED HE HAD DISCUSSED SAHARA ISSUE AT LENGTH WITH PRESIDENT BOUMEDIEUNE A FEW DAYS AGO, AND STATED THAT ALGERIA AND MAURITANIA ARE IN FULL AGREEMENT ON PROBLEM OF RESOLUTION.

9. MOUKNASS CMNCLUDED HIS PRESENTATION BY DECLARING HE HAD SUMMONED MEON URGENT BASIS BECAUSE (A) US IS GOODFRIEND; (B) US IS GREAT POWER; (C) US IS CLOSE FRIEND OF SPAIN; AND (D) PRESIDENT FORD IS AT THIS VERY MOMENT IN MADRID ENGAGED IN WIDE RANGING CONVERSATION WITH HIGHEST LEVELSOF GOS. MINISTER STATED GIRM HOPES USG WILL IMPRESS UPON GOS CRITICAL NEED FOR ORDERLY AND CAREFULLY WORKED OUT DECOLONIZATION PROGRAM FOR WESTERN SAHARA, THE IMPORTANCE OF SPAIN BEHAVING IN RESPONSIBLE FASHION AND MAINTAINING PRESENT SITUATION IN ALL ITS ASPECTSUNTIL DETAILED EXIT PROCEDURE CAN BE DEvised BY INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY, AND, FINALLY, FACT THA GIRM WILL NEVER ACCEPT UNILATERAL GOS DECISION TO TRANSFER POWER OF SAHARA TO ENTITY CHOSEN BY IT ALONE.

10. IN RESPONSE, I NOTED USG HAD TRADITIONALLY TAKEN POSITION OF STRICT NEUTRALITY ON SUBSTANCE OF SAHARA DISPUTE, BUT HAD AND WOULD CONTINUE TO URGE FOUR MOST DIRECTLY INTERESTED STATES (ALL OF WHOM ARE OUR GOOD FRIENDS) TO WORK TOWARD REASONABLE AND ABOVE ALL PEACEFUL SOLUTION TO DIFFICULT PROBLEM. I ASSURED MINISTER I WOULD IMMEDIATELY CONVEY TIS VIEWS TO US AUTHORITIES. HANDYSIDE

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